



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

MEMO

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Holiday season: useful tips for a worry-free summer

With the holiday season already starting and millions of Europeans intending on travelling within and outside the European Union, there are certain travel considerations that every European should be aware of. Whether these concern having a health insurance, resolving travel disputes with an operator or travelling with a pet, these tips provide a useful insight into the ways in which the EU is working to help and assist EU travellers.

Who can help me if I have a medical emergency?

Are you planning on travelling in the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland? If so, don't forget your European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). The card can help you save time, hassle and money if you fall ill or suffer an injury while abroad. The Card is available – free of charge – from national health insurance providers. It guarantees access to urgent treatment under the same conditions and at the same cost (free in some countries) as people insured in that country.

To find out more:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=559>

A handy guide on how to use the Card in the 27 EU countries, Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway and Switzerland is now available as an application for smartphones. It includes general information about the card, emergency phone numbers, treatments that are covered and costs, how to claim reimbursement and who to contact in case you have lost your card. The app is available in 24 languages.

Download the "European Health Insurance Card" app for your smartphone:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=559>

Who should I call in case of emergency?

112 is the single European emergency number, reachable everywhere in the EU, from landlines and mobile phones, free of charge. 112 links the caller to the relevant emergency service (local police, fire brigade or medical services) and is available 24-hours a day. 112 is now operational in all EU member states alongside existing national emergency numbers (like 999 or 110). Denmark, Finland, Malta, The Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and Sweden have decided to make 112 their sole or main national emergency number. 112 is also being used in a few countries outside the EU, such as Croatia, Montenegro and Turkey.

To find out more:

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/112/index_en.htm

I'm travelling outside Europe but my country has no embassy or consulate at my destination. Who should I contact if I need help?

As a citizen of an EU Member State, you are automatically an EU citizen, thus entitled to consular assistance if you are outside the EU (even though your own country is not represented). You can go to any other EU Member State's consulate or embassy to ask for help, if for example you are arrested, have a serious accident or lose important documents.

You are also entitled to assistance in crisis situations: EU Member States must help citizens evacuate when needed as if they were their own nationals.

You can find out if your country is represented at your destination on the European Commission's consular protection website:

<http://ec.europa.eu/consularprotection>

Who should I call if my child should go missing?

The European Union has agreed on a common helpline number (116 000) to report a missing child anywhere in the EU's 27 Member States. Whether you are a parent whose child has gone missing, a child who has got lost or run away, or a person holding information about a missing child, you can dial this same number which will connect you to an experienced organisation able to provide support and practical assistance, whether it is psychological, legal or administrative.

More information on:

<http://www.hotline116000.eu/>

During my holidays, I have had problems with an airline, a car rental company or a tour operator. Who can help me?

If I experience cancellations or delays for flights or train journeys ...

If you have problems with a scheduled or charter airline (such as flight cancellations or delays), you have specific rights under the EU's air Passenger Rights Regulation.

More info on EU air passenger rights:

<http://ec.europa.eu/transport/passenger-rights/en/03-air.html>

If you have a problem with time change or cancellations concerning train departures, you are granted specific rights under the EU's rail passenger rights regulation. When travelling in an international rail service, you benefit from common rules within the EU.

More info on EU rail passenger rights:

<http://ec.europa.eu/transport/passenger-rights/en/13-rail.html>

If I have problems with bus or boat trips...

New EU legislation on passenger rights for bus and boat trips has already been adopted and will enter into force in Dec 2012 and March 2013, respectively. Next summer, you should thus be able to enjoy comparable rights to those established for the air and rail sector.

If you need more help, you can turn to your national consumer organisation for advice. A *list of contacts is available at:*

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/empowerment/cons_networks_en.htm#national

Which specific provisions apply if I am a disabled traveller?

EU Passenger rights legislation has been set up to protect disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility from discrimination when travelling by air or train, and to enable them to have the same access to mobility as other citizens.

You can check the following links for all information:

by air: <http://ec.europa.eu/transport/passenger-rights/en/03-air.html>

by train: <http://ec.europa.eu/transport/passenger-rights/en/13-rail.html>

If you are unable to resolve the complaint with a company based in another EU country, a **European Consumer Centre** in your country can help you with your case.

The European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net) is an EU-wide network co-sponsored by the European Commission and the Member States. It is made up of 29 centres, one in each of the 27 EU Member States and also in Iceland and Norway. The ECCs can offer legal and practical advice, help to mediate with a company in another European country, or propose other solutions.

More on the ECC-Net, including contact details:

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/ecc/index_en.htm

Download the app! Your rights always with you.

If you are a smart phone user you can download the new application on passenger rights and have all the information with you at all times.

To download please follow this link:

<http://ec.europa.eu/transport/passenger-rights/en/mobile.html>

I've booked a package holiday but my operator went bust. Can I get a refund?

The [Package Travel Directive](#) protects European consumers going on holidays and covers pre-arranged package holidays combining at least two of the following: (1) transport, (2) accommodation (3) other tourists services such as sightseeing tours (sold at an inclusive price).

The Directive provides protection covering: information in brochures, rights to cancel without penalty, liability for services (e.g. sub-standard hotels) and protection in the case of a tour operator or airline going bust.

I liked my holiday so much, I'm thinking of buying a timeshare at the same resort. What are the rules?

Thanks to new EU rules that are now in place all 27 Member States ([IP/12/528](#)), timeshare sellers must provide detailed information to customers in appropriate time, before the customer is bound by any contract, including the price to be paid, a description of the product and the exact period and length of stay that the customer is entitled to under the contract. This information should be provided in the customer's own language if they so choose.

The rules also ensure that customers may withdraw from a contract within a "cooling-off" period of 14 calendar days and that traders are not allowed to ask customers for any form of advance payment or deposit during that period. Before the conclusion of the contract, the trader is required to explicitly draw the customer's attention to the existence of the right of withdrawal, the length of the withdrawal period and the ban on advance payments during the withdrawal period.

Exorbitant telephone bills ruin my holiday budget. How can I reduce them while traveling?

The new regulation for mobile roaming came into force on 1 July 2012. The key news is price caps for mobile internet roaming. This is roaming for the smart-phone generation. However, consumers should choose data offers carefully. For example, agreeing to pay 2 or 3 euros a day for unlimited data roaming is a great deal, but customers will pay whether they use the data or not. So for those downloading smaller amounts of data, the price caps are a safety net. Prices for voice calls and text messages also fell – to lower than typical domestic costs. Under the new rules, maximum charges are as follows:

- 29 cents per minute to make a call, plus VAT,
- 8 cents per minute to receive a call, plus VAT
- 9 cents to send a text message, plus VAT
- 70 cents per Megabyte (MB) to download data or browse the Internet whilst travelling abroad (charged per Kilobyte used), plus VAT.

To find out more about the roaming regulation or find your operator and its tariff, go to: http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/roaming/index_en.htm

What do I need to know if I want to take my pet (cat, dog or ferret) with me on holiday in the EU?

EU citizen travelling within the EU: Travelling within EU with your pet is possible: there are just a few things to keep in mind. A valid anti-rabies vaccination must be entered into your pet passport when you travel with your dog to another EU country. However, if you travel to Ireland, Finland, Malta or the United Kingdom your pet will also need to undergo anti-parasite treatment. These rules are only applicable to dogs, cats and ferrets. For young dogs or cats or any other types of pets, it is advisable to check with the competent authorities of the EU country that you are planning to visit to find out the specific conditions it sets for travelling to that country with your pet.

For more information:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/liveanimals/pets/nat_rules_dogscatferret_en.htm

EU citizen travelling home from outside the EU: A pet passport is used for pets travelling within EU countries or returning home from outside the EU. Depending on your holiday destination, your pet may be required, in addition to the anti-rabies vaccination, to undergo tests and wait for three months before entering the EU.

If you are a resident of Andorra, Croatia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway, San Marino, Switzerland or the Vatican City State holding a pet passport for your pet you are entitled to travel with your pet within the EU.

For more information:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/liveanimals/pets/index_en.htm

During my stay, which type of fish can I eat?

The European Commission has proposed a complete overhaul of the EU's Common Fisheries Policy, making fishing sustainable in order to ensure a future for the EU fishing industry, protect the marine environment and have sufficient fish for future generations. The proposals are currently being discussed by the European Parliament and the Council. But while policy-makers discuss to make changes for the better, you can also do your part as a consumer by asking for sustainable fish.

Choose your fish wisely. Overall, 2 out of 3 fish stocks are overfished, comprising 80 % of Mediterranean stocks and half the stocks in the Atlantic. Whenever you buy fish, your choice counts. You have the purchasing power to make a difference.

What can you do? Ask the fishmonger, retailer or restaurateur about the fish they sell, or look it up in a seafood guide. Several organisations produce guides for different countries in the EU, listing recommended seafood products.

Do you always buy the same type of fish? High demand for certain species of fish and seafood can lead to overfishing. In contrast, many lesser-known species are far more plentiful. Look beyond the usual suspects and try something new for a change. Holidays are a good time to experiment!

For more information, check out the "[Choose your fish](#)" website.

Can I bring back some meat or cheese from my holidays abroad?

When returning home from most countries outside the EU, it is illegal to bring back any meat or dairy products whether these are for yourself or as a gift for others.

A few neighbouring countries are excluded. For example, if you are returning from Croatia, the Faeroe Islands, Greenland or Iceland you can bring back less than 10 kilos of certain products of animal origin. There are also a few other exceptions: one, for instance, concerns powdered infant milk, infant food and special foods or special pet food required for medical reasons. These products, however, must be in sealed packaging and should not weigh more than two kilos or require refrigeration before opening.

You can also bring back fish and certain shellfish provided they do not exceed 20 kilos in weight, except from the Faeroe Islands or Iceland where no weight restrictions apply. Other animal products, such as honey, also have a weight restriction of two kilos.

When transporting animal products between countries inside the EU, these rules do not apply. Nor do they apply if you are coming from Andorra, Liechtenstein, Norway, San Marino or Switzerland.

Further restrictions may apply in the event of infectious animal diseases in third countries.

In case of doubt, it is recommended to check with the veterinary service at the point of entry into the EU (airport, port, road, etc.).

It is important to remember that these rules exist in order to protect your health and the health of the EU's livestock from serious animal diseases.

For more information, check out the travel Europa website!

http://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/travel/index_en.htm

For more FAQs:

http://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/travel/faq/index_en.htm#need-help

If you wish to ask another question, you can do so at the following address:

http://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/help/index_en.htm

